Supplement on the Fourth Anniversary of Daniel Pearl

A miraculous story of dynamic person, fond of talking to strangers

Daniel Pearl & Yousaf Qaradwi

Memory conveys the mission of east/west friendship & tolerance that Danny came to symbolize.

Memories
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Let us pledge to ourselves on eve of Daniel’s Anniversary
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MESSAGE FROM
JUDEA PEARL
RUTH PEARL

(ترجمة بدوبيبي)
Message from Judea & Ruth Pearl

You lived an extraordinary life, Danny, and you died an extraordinary death.

You lived a life that knew no geographical boundaries, with a spirit that knew no prejudice. Through words and music, you communicated joy, humor, friendship and understanding in many parts of the world.

You found colors where we saw only gray,  
You heard music in what we took for noise.  
You saw people where we read statistics.

And in your death, four years ago,  
you held your head up high,  
higher than any of us can imagine,  
and reminded us of the challenge of understanding others.

Your murderers tried to saw fears among us but, behold, your words made millions of people of different backgrounds and beliefs come together, build trust, and unite in a common stand for sanity and humanity.

This is your victory, Danny, the victory of the boldness with which you loved humanity.

It is the victory of humanity over those who try to suppress its spirit.

It is the victory of every human freedom,  
forever striving for the noble  
Forever daring for the impossible.

Ruth and Judea Pearl  
Los Angeles, California, USA
First Meeting Turned into Lasting Friendship
Sharad Singh

Meeting Danny and Marianne was an incident, I would never forget. The experience though lasted only for 10 seconds, is still etched in my mind. I met them for the first time in Bangalore. At that time I was working for the Madhya Pradesh provincial government to promote information and technology in the state.

When I saw the duo walk into the stall I was manning, initially I was apprehensive and wary of talking to total strangers. But curiosity took the better of me and I introduced myself, which started off a relationship between me and Danny.

The relationship was based on mutual respect and love. While I held Danny in high esteem and looked for every opportunity to learn from him, he was always looking out to learn about local culture, the Indian way of life and society through me and from me.

Having lived in Bhopal for a good part of my life and the memories of the Union Carbide Gas tragedy still raw in the mind of her residents, Danny was a totally different learning experience. He was pivotal in informing me about the real extent of the tragedy, how it was waiting to happen and all other aspects of it. The best thing I learnt was that all Americans couldn't be blamed for the tragedy just because Anderson refused to stand trial in India.

Working with Danny was a new learning experience. I came to see the hard work he put in for his stories, meticulous way he went about to unearth the roots of the news and always willing to look at the other side of the story so that a balance picture could be presented, which I believe ultimately cost his life.

Another thing I distinctly remember about Danny was that he was the ultimate family man. More than his brutal murder death, what has pained me more was the fact that he passed away before he could see his son, which I know he was eagerly awaiting. He loved Marianne very much. He used to take care of her and used to call her practically every hour when they were not around.

Having seen him close quarters and worked with him, I believe the real loss due to the brutal murder is not that he is no more with us but the fact that he could have been a bridge between two different civilization values. He was the perfect anti-thesis for the class of civilization theory. He was a Jew but in love with the Arab world and all things Arab. He could have furthered the cause of Arab-Jewish unity which could have solved a big problem facing the world.

Ultimately the tag citizen of world which my friends gave to Danny, I believe was appropriate and only Danny merited that title.
Daniel Pearl's Biography

February 2002: Pakistani police say Mohammad Siddiqi dropped the phone across Journalist Daniel Pearl's throat.

1981-1985

Daniel Pearl was born in the United States of America on 10th August 1981. He grew up in a middle-class family and became interested in journalism at a young age.

1990-1993

Pearl attended Stanford University where he studied political science and journalism. He later went on to work for various newspapers and news agencies.

1994-1996

In 1994, Pearl joined the Wall Street Journal where he covered stories related to the Middle East. He was based in Afghanistan and Pakistan, covering the elections in 1995 and the war against the Taliban in 1996.

1997-2001

Pearl moved to London to work for the Sunday Times, where he covered stories related to the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

February 20, 2002

Pearl was kidnapped in Karachi, Pakistan, on February 20, 2002. He was later beheaded by al-Qaeda and his body was found on March 23, 2002.

Daniel Pearl was a brave journalist who dedicated his life to reporting on the world's most pressing issues. His work continues to inspire journalists and people around the world.
Why ISI Failed to Capture Saud Memon

*Steve Levine*

For more than two years, there has been no progress in resolving the final threads of Daniel Pearl's murder. The remaining mysteries are not minor, but consequential in a broad sense.

The main questions are: where is Saud Memon? Was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed really Pearl's killer and, if he was, who were his accomplices? And why did the Interservices Intelligence Directorate, perhaps Pearl's sole chance to survive, not act to help him?

In January 2002, Memon, a Karachi businessman, allowed militants to use one of his landholdings - a nursery on Karachi's outskirts - as a base to hold Pearl in captivity. On the last day of Pearl's life, it was Memon who drove the journalist's killers to the nursery, where they executed him.

Memon is important not only because of his culpability as an accomplice in Pearl's kidnapping and murder. He could shed light on who financed the plot - other accomplices have said that takeout food was purchased throughout Pearl's captivity to feed him and his guards; a video camera was purchased, and more.

Before they knew of his involvement, Pakistani investigators interviewed Memon, but by the time they returned he had vanished, they said. Some said he had gone to the United Arab Emirates. That Memon in fact may be in Pakistan was underscored by author Bernard-Henri Levy in his book *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?*. Through go-betweens, Levy was assured of an interview with Memon. When Levy showed up for it, Memon's uncle was there instead, saying that Memon had just fled, fearing that authorities were closing in on him. The episode indicates that Memon may be easier to find than investigators claimed.

Two and a half years ago, a senior Bush administration official said in an interview that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the former al Qaeda operations chief, was Pearl's actual killer. It was Khalid Sheikh, along with two other men, whom Memon had driven to his nursery around the end of January, the official said. Such a role by Khalid Sheikh had already been reported by Pakistani reporter Kamran Khan, by Pakistan-based *Time* magazine correspondents, and by terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna, all using anonymous sources.

Khalid Sheikh was captured in Pakistan in 2003. Pakistani police agencies had no contact with him; only Pakistani intelligence officials interrogated Khalid Sheikh before handing him over to the Central Intelligence Agency for imprisonment elsewhere. The initial reports about his involvement in the Pearl case therefore were probably based on Pakistani intelligence sources.

None of the reports offered up details on Khalid Sheikh's role, and provided no way to independently judge their credibility. So that, while the reports may be true, they cannot be taken as an article of faith; only a public trial of Khalid Sheikh would do that. And in such a case, in which some of the main actors have been implicated in serious violence such as attacks on Shiites and on President Pervez Musharraf himself, it is imperative for all parties - including Pakistani police, who have made many of the main advances in breaking the terrorist network - to know categorically whether Khalid Sheikh in fact was the killer.
Even if one takes the reports on their face, however, they are insufficient. Accomplices who are in custody have said that Memon arrived at the compound with not one but three Arabic-speaking men. There is an indication that one of the three men died in a shootout with police – one of Pearl's guards identified his photograph - but the third isn't publicly known. Who is he? Has he been captured? Is he alive?

And how was it that the plot grew from a kidnapping scheme by Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh into a murder committed purportedly by the very top of the al Qaeda leadership? Once it was decided to kill Pearl, why did Khalid Sheikh, without any history of hands-on participation in al Qaeda violence, himself carry it out?

It does not appear that Ahmed Omar, who conceived the kidnapping and asked militant organizer Amjad Farouki to put it into action, had any direct way to contact the captors once the abduction had taken place. Pearl also appears to have survived only a week, and just a few days after the first evidence - e-mailed photographs of him in captivity - surfaced. Pearl's kidnappers ignored repeated efforts to initiate a dialogue or negotiations. There simply wasn't enough time for police to find him.

There was, however, one way that Pearl might have been rescued. That's if the Interservices Intelligence Directorate, the ISI, had stepped in. Ahmed Omar was a long-time ISI asset; when Karachi police finally tracked him down by telephone in early February 2002, he went directly to a former senior ISI officer in the Punjab, and was secretly sheltered for a full week before Karachi police were notified and took custody of him. Pearl was already dead by the time Ahmed Omar had sought sanctuary with the agency, so the ISI couldn't have saved the journalist at that moment. But there was time between the Jan. 23 kidnapping and Pearl's death about a week later.

Ahmed Omar was probably Pakistan's most notorious kidnapper after having served time in an Indian prison for abductions there. No westerner had been kidnapped in Pakistan in recent memory. It is conceivable that if the ISI had taken the case seriously from the start, any list of possible suspects would have to at least include Ahmed Omar; given his history, he might have even been the only name on the list. If the agency picked him up, he could have led its agents to Amjad Farouki, and perhaps to Pearl himself.

But the ISI didn't treat the case seriously. In private conversation, agents commented derisively and conspiratorially about the journalist and his work. Only when President Musharraf was about to leave to see President Bush in early February, and it became clear that the Pakistani leader would be asked about the high-profile case, did the ISI leadership appear to try to resolve the case. With Ahmed Omar in their custody, ISI officers asked him to call his contacts in Karachi. When he did so, he was told, in code language, that Pearl was dead.
Even now, remembering my friend Daniel Pearl is easy. Whenever I think about him, I can see the quizzical look on his face and the intensity in his eyes. I can hear the excitement in his voice when talking about a newspaper story about an important issue, and the easy laughter with his colleagues over a joke.

It is hard to believe that Danny, as everyone called him, has been gone so long. But four years after his death, I think of him often and he remains a presence for me and for so many of his friends and colleagues.

Danny was a special person who made friends everywhere he went, whether it was across the street or across the world. He was also a superb reporter, with his keen sense of social justice and his fierce independence in search of the truth, and his insight into other peoples and an understanding of their cultures.

In many ways, I believe that Danny Pearl is still with us. That’s because Danny’s spirit, the essence of who he was, still shines so bright, and I believe it always will.

What Danny stood for - not just a great eye for detail and a wonderful story-telling ability - is what distinguishes memorable journalism from the hundreds of other stories that are written every day.

Journalistically, Danny Pearl was passionate about two things: seeking and telling the truth, no matter where it took him and no matter whose hackles it raised; and explaining to his readers, mostly Americans but citizens of all nations as well, what it was like to be in the shoes of the people - often dispossessed and powerless - that he was writing about. He had a rare talent for getting close to his subjects, of finding out who they were, of delving into their deepest feelings and learning about their worst fears, in order to help us see how the world looked through their eyes.

Danny wrote so many illuminating and provocative stories, so many that made us look at things from a different perspective, and with a greater comprehension. Many of them are included in a collection of his works that was published after his death as a book titled, “At Home in the World.” I love that title because it really captures just how well suited Danny was to be a foreign correspondent. What he wrote didn’t always fit conventional wisdom, however, or please governments or political figures. But then, that’s often what really good, independent journalism is about. One of my favorite stories by Danny was a front-page article he did on the war in the Balkans. Like many other
journalists, Danny wrote about the atrocities committed against Bosnian Muslims by their ethnic Serbian neighbors.

But Danny also recognized that there were wrongs committed by all sides in this tragic war. So wrote a story about the mistreatment of ethnic Serbs living in Croatia. That some Serbs also were victims was a courageous story to write, a story that many people hadn’t considered, and some refused to listen to. But Danny told it anyway, because he understood and felt compelled to relate complexities that the truth almost always entails.

As his sister Michelle put it so well, Danny “was interested in the shades of gray in the world, rather than the extremes of black and white.”

I also remember a front-page story he did in 1998 in the wake of the U.S. bombing of a Sudanese pharmaceutical factory alleged to have been involved in helping Islamic terrorists. After exhaustive reporting of the reasons given to justify the bombing of the factory, Danny concluded in his story that the “evidence becomes murkier the closer you look” and that “links in the chain of evidence outlined by U.S. officials are weaker than past reports have suggested.”

This independence and this determination to find the truth was a trademark of Danny’s work no matter whom he was writing about. In November 2001, for example, Danny reported that supporters of Osama bin Laden were benefiting from the trade of a rare gem called tanzanite, and some of the profits from the trading may well have helped fund terror activities.

Whereas far too many journalism stories that today start with a preconceived notion that is then “confirmed” by the reporting, these stories - and many others by Danny - show the best that the media can be: examining the facts and challenging the reader to look inside himself and question his own prejudices.

I can’t talk about my colleague Danny’s exceptional work without talking about my friend Danny’s winning personality, because they were so inextricably linked. Even though he was in his early 30s at the time he first became a foreign correspondent in London, where he worked for me beginning in the mid-1990s, he was a mentor to colleagues, some only a few years younger than he was. His desk at work reflected his ever-cheerful personality. It was adorned with mementos from his trips - a rug from Jordan, a giant water pipe, prayer beads. And a beach chair.

While Danny wrote about the politics of the world, he had no political agenda. His agenda was to always, always, always determine the facts, and to never draw more conclusions from the facts than he could. He believed strongly that shining the light of truth onto a subject, and informing people, would lead to making this world a better and more peaceful place.

It was this search for the truth, sadly, that killed Danny, along with the fact that he was a Jew. Even now, I still find it beyond belief that this reporter so dedicated to understanding other cultures, and explaining other peoples, could have been targeted and so despicably murdered. If only they had read his stories, I tell myself, maybe they
would have recognized that Danny was among a rare group who help bridge the divides that keep the world apart.

In the aftermath of Danny’s death, journalists everywhere died a little bit. But we must not let die the spirit of what Danny stood for. I am certain, absolutely certain, that he would be heartened to see that reporters for many newspapers continue to pursue the truth, writing bravely about events in the Middle East, especially in Iraq. The best of these journalists, like Danny, endeavor to explain what is happening from the perspective of the people who live in these places, people who want to live in freedom, who want to live in peace with the neighbors, who want a good life for their children and their children’s children.

It is vital to the freedom of people everywhere that journalists courageously continue to question conventional wisdom, continue to challenge people in authority - whether here in the United States or abroad - continue to pursue stories wherever it takes them so that they can explain the truth with all its nuances.

We owe nothing less to ourselves, to our readers -- and, most of all, to those journalists like Danny whose work sets such a high standard and who have given their very lives for the noble pursuit of the truth.
From Tragedy to Symbol of Hope
Kenneth Neil Cukier

In February 2006, four years after he was murdered, Daniel Pearl still makes headlines. In mid February, Google News recorded over 150 news stories that mentioned his name. The stories shed important insights into the way in which Danny’s image has been transformed from slain reporter to icon of hope — yet also represents the deep problems that the world must still overcome.

One story is about a press fellowship for a journalist from Nepal to spend five months at the Berkshire Eagle in Massachusetts, where Danny first worked as a newspaperman. Another story is about high school students launching an international news service, with the support of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, the organization set up in 2002 to further the goals of cross-cultural understanding and religious tolerance that Danny devoted his life towards promoting.

Yet a third article noted the hugely-successful public dialogue series between Danny’s father Judea Pearl, and the noted Pakistani Islamic scholar Akbar Ahmed, where the two men discuss Jewish and Muslim issues, with a lot of audience input, in an effort to bridge differences and promote understanding. Still other stories tell of a movie being made about his life, speeches in his honor, and even a rock music concert in Karachi by Bryan Adams.

The articles attest to the phenomenal degree to which Danny is as powerful a force for changing the world for the better in the after-life, as he was when he walked the earth.

A new generation of journalist is emerging around the world with Danny as their pole-star, someone to respect and admire. His story is universal — touching people of all nationalities and religions. Rather than drive people apart, the tragedy of Danny is actually bringing people together.

His abductors believed they were killing a Jew, an American, and a journalist. Instead, they succeeded in sparking a backlash against them and what they stand for, by the vast majority of people worldwide who are revolted by the barbarism. The story of this young man — whose sword was but a pen, and whose shield was the truth — became the personal, individualized representation of the futility of terrorism after 9/11.

When his pregnant wife pleaded for his release, his misfortune touched the lives of hundreds of the millions of people around the world, who could sympathize with the couple, who were outraged by the events, and who spoke out against terrorism. Danny stands for multi-culturalism: from his Israeli father to his Baghdad-born mother, to his wife
Mariane, a French woman of Cuban descent, he was the embodiment of our globalized world.

Today, Danny serves as a beacon for religious understanding, nonviolence, a free press, and the special sort of American who immerses himself in other cultures in order to learn, respect, and relate to others. His story has been so important a symbol that his name is still regularly brought up in many news stories each day.

However, although Danny’s name is invoked as a sign of how the world is uniting against terrorism, it is also unfortunately in the media as a reminder of just how much farther the world needs to go to promote peace. Many news stories discuss Danny in the context of the hostage-taking in Iraq of reporters and other civilians, who are often threatened with decapitation – and videoed, in a horrific attempt to publicize and glorify the killings. Moreover, some news stories follow the legal situation in Pakistan, where the justice system works slowly, and the case is still ongoing as Danny’s murders maneuver for more legal ways to avert punishment.

Yet if the continual references in the media suggest anything, it is that rather than killing Danny, the terrorist made him immortal. From the cut flower, a thousand blossoms bloom.
Danny! A Journalist of Great Courage and Character

Jill Abramson

Daniel Pearl was a journalist of great courage and character. He loved covering obscure stories that did not attract the attention of lots of other journalists. In Washington, where we were colleagues at The Wall Street Journal in the 1990s, Danny adored writing about transportation and telecommunications and never begged to cover the White House or Congress. He once wrote a very funny story about a backwater of the federal government called the Interstate Commerce Commission, where government bureaucrats sat around making decisions about how to classify candy. But he never had a simplistic view of the politicians he covered and wrote about everyone, even members of Congress, with empathy and insight.

Danny was a very good friend to his colleagues at The Wall Street Journal. He played the violin extremely well and often invited friends from work to hear him play at clubs around Washington. He liked to go to offbeat places and once spent a night with me at a duckpin bowling alley in suburban Virginia. He made up new lyrics to songs about funny things that happened at The Wall Street Journal.

Then Danny moved to London and became a foreign correspondent. He still wrote some humorous stories, like one about how the eggs of sturgeon are extracted to make caviar. Increasingly, he saw journalism as a great way to build bridges between people of different backgrounds and nationalities. His lovely pieces all reflected this belief and approach to reporting. I was not surprised when Danny chose to live in Bombay instead of New Delhi when he was assigned to cover India. Most of the other U.S. journalists were in Delhi, but Danny was much more interested in circulating with the real people of a country, not the politicians and other journalists.

Danny was bravely reporting to his last breath. He leaves behind a legacy of wonderful journalism that will endure through the ages. His friends, including me, miss him terribly. Since his death, a group of Danny's journalist friends have gathered at my apartment on his birthday each year to remember him and his work. We play music in his honor, although none of us is as talented as he was. Mariane, his wife, and Adam, his son, have come. Mariane once brought Danny's violin case, a symbol that he remains among us. His belief that journalism builds bridges informs my work every day. Thank you for letting me share my memories of him with his friends in Pakistan.
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Daniel Pearl, a Ray of Hope

Ammara Durrani

The Daniel Pearl Fellowship is an exceptional honor for any journalist who sees his/her profession as more than just a job. Because that is how Danny practiced it—as a means to reach out to people from cultures other than his own, and to tell their stories with the universal empathy of humanism.

As the second Daniel Pearl Fellow who worked in a major US newspaper for six months, I learned how this fellowship set in his name is playing a crucial role in realizing Danny’s quest for world class journalism and his dream for a better world.

Being based in his hometown, Los Angeles, and close to his family, I felt a personal connection with Danny’s spirit as I worked at the Los Angeles Times. There, I learnt American journalism’s best practices and ethics, and witnessed firsthand the factors and ideas that go into making US newspapers as some of the finest in the world.

I also learned what Danny and his legacy means to friends and strangers alike. The love, affection, generosity and genuine interest that I received as a DP Fellow wherever I went and whatever I did, showed me how seriously Danny’s work and message is taken by people in his country.

The Daniel Pearl Foundation’s efforts to use journalism, music and dialogue, for spreading Danny’s message beyond the borders of America, show a unique courage against divisive forces of the world. In a world that is on fire, the Foundation stands as a symbol of persistent creative and humane approach that is necessary to eliminate the politics and violence of hatred.

Political powers have taken too much liberty for too long with the peoples of the world. Their rhetoric of hate and business of conflict must be replaced by voices of reason and creative enterprise of respectful cooperation.

The Foundation’s cross-cultural professional and vocational exchanges and its interfaith dialogue are brave steps in reclaiming that most precious of spaces that Danny called home—a bridged, better world.
Daniel Pearl Fellowship
An Introduction
A Courageous Interfaith Dialogue Story
Paola Span

The ongoing interfaith dialogue between Professors Judea Pearl and Akbar Ahmed, which began in 2003, stems from a simple idea: That discussion can replace violence.

At another point in history, these two men might never have met. Judea Pearl, father of the murdered Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, is Israeli-born and has spent most of his career at the University of California in Los Angeles, where he’s a professor of computer science and a leading researcher into artificial intelligence. Akbar Ahmed, a Pakistani-born anthropologist, diplomat, and Islamic scholar, lived for years in London but now holds the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, D.C.

But since 2003, they have traveled across the United States and to Canada and Britain to address the growing rift between Muslims and Jews. Though Islam and Judaism are both “Abrahamic” faiths with overlapping histories and many shared values, in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, their relationship in many parts of the world has grown bitter. Audiences have proved eager to hear what Dr. Pearl and Dr. Ahmed have to say about overcoming that hatred.

“We’re just two grandfathers on a stage, talking,” says Dr. Ahmed.

Their first interfaith dialogue, which took place at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, was intended as a one-time event. But it drew 500 Christians, Muslims and Jews, and generated considerable attention in the press. A member of the Pakistani National Assembly, invited by Dr. Ahmed, even offered Pearl the first public apology from anyone in the Pakistani government for the death of his son.

So the two grandfathers began to consider holding discussions in other cities. Their interfaith dialogue moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one of America’s oldest cities, where the Declaration of Independence was adopted. They went next to the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Drs. Pearl and Ahmed spent several days in London, and accepted an invitation from a conference of human rights agencies held in Chicago.

Last year their itinerary included Duke University in North Carolina, Ottawa and Toronto in Canada, the University of California at Irvine, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City.
The sessions usually include a conversation between the two professors, followed by questions and comments from the audience.

Dr. Pearl often makes a point of calling his actions, as president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation which promotes international and interfaith tolerance, his “revenge” for his son’s murder. He does not seek literal retaliation, he points out. Even if that were possible, “What do I achieve? There will be 100 more” fanatics. His true revenge, he says, is to take aim at “the whole ideology that created the madness.” What he wants, he says, is “to tame the hate.”

Dr. Ahmed, who has a long history of interfaith dialogue in Britain, is particularly concerned with explaining Islam to western audiences. “America is being misled,” he sometimes fears. During the dialogues, he often explains that while some Muslims are drawn to Osama bin Laden “as a symbol,” they don’t necessarily subscribe to his philosophy. “Osama’s actions, you need to know this, are not rooted in Islam,” he told listeners in Williamsburg. He went on to point out that the Koran condemns the murder of innocents.

The dialogues have drawn considerable media attention around the world. News stories have appeared not only in the United States and Europe but also in Karachi, Jerusalem, Riyadh and Beirut. Dr. Pearl and Dr. Ahmed have appeared frequently on television, including al-Jazeera.

To overcome years of conflict with simple conversation may seem an impossible task, the two men concede. But they feel the need to continue. Dr. Pearl has praised Dr. Ahmed’s courage in undertaking the project, and the respect is mutual.

“We have troubles, we have hate, and then we have these wonderful moments that really make us human, that inspire us,” Dr. Ahmed says. “Dr. Pearl is one of those wonders.”
AN ABRACHAMIC DIALOGUE

By: Umer Akbar Ahmed
The problem—and the challenge—that I faced as a Muslim scholar after 9/11 was the difficult and controversial relationship between mainstream Americans and Muslims. It affected Muslims living in the United States and American foreign policy. After all, America has close relations with friends like Pakistan and difficult relations with Iran, both Muslim nations. Besides, American troops are involved in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11. Not unnaturally, many people began to look at Muslims through a negative prism. The powerful idea of the “clash of civilizations” was now dominant in explaining the unhappy relationship with Muslims.

To tackle the problem, I launched several initiatives. On one level, I actively appeared in the media however inconvenient it was for me personally. And on another level, I participated in dialogues with non-Muslims. With Professor Judea Pearl, the father of the late reporter Daniel Pearl who was tragically murdered in Karachi, I conducted public dialogues in the U.S., Canada and UK.

The dialogue with Professor Pearl was at first difficult for me because of the tragic nature of his son’s death in the city where I grew up. But, it was precisely the nature of the tragedy which acted as a catalyst to form a new kind of dialogue between Jews and Muslims. In that sense, Professor Pearl had converted a personal tragedy of unimaginable proportion into a triumph of the human will. In the process, we also became good friends.

The dialogues have begun to make an impact both on American society and in the Muslim world. Although it has been a slow and arduous exercise it appears to be paying off; people are responding. Late in December 2005, for example, Judea Pearl and I found ourselves on the final list of Beliefnet’s “Most Inspiring People of 2005”. To be in a list with Bono certainly surprised me. On the other side, a Pakistani newspaper editor asked Professor Pearl and myself to contribute articles about Daniel Pearl as a symbol of bridge-building.
The Muslim community, initially reluctant to participate, soon responded positively. In the dialogue we had in Ottawa, the Pakistani and Israeli ambassadors were seated side by side in the audience and at Toronto the respective Consul Generals participated. These events created a predisposition for dialogue between nations and I was not altogether surprised when President Musharraf of Pakistan became the first Pakistani President to address a large Jewish group in New York in September 2005.

Once the process of dialogue starts then old prejudices begin to change. I have seen Jewish and Muslim groups who were battling each other just days before we arrived join our dialogue and afterwards appear to be in animated but amiable conversation (for example at Duke University). I believe that results can be obtained in the future if we continue to use the same methodology while maintaining its freshness and integrity so that people who listen to us are able to help ease tensions between different communities.

I have found that when the process of dialogue starts with sincerity then understanding is encouraged; with understanding participants in dialogue often become friends. Friendship changes everything. My hope is that over the next few years my vision for the future is shared more and more by an ever increasing circle of strangers who can become friends. Unfortunately, this long term commitment needs support to provide logistics on the ground. Too often organizing the dialogue—or even making the relevant literature available—is frustrated by shortage of funds. The vital task of dialogue and bridge building cannot be left on the shoulders of one or two individuals alone. The struggle to establish a “dialogue of civilizations” over the “clash of civilizations” will be one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century.